Applications for NORI certificates

2701. SHRI KANJIBHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of applications for issuance of NORI (No Obligation to Return to India) certificates received by the various regional passport offices during the last two years;

(b) the number of applications which are lying pending or under process with the RPOs particularly, with the RPO, Lucknow;

(c) the time by which these applications are likely to be finalized; and

(d) the number of applications which have been rejected with the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (d) The information is being compiled from the Passport Offices and will be placed on the Table of the House.

Indians in jails of Pakistan

2702. SHRI AMAR SINGH:
SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Indians in jails of Pakistan at present;

(b) the number out of them who have completed their imprisonment terms;

(c) whether Government has taken any steps to get such persons released from Pakistan's jails who have completed their term of imprisonment;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Information available with Government is that there are 205 Indian prisoners and 436 Indian fishermen in jails in Pakistan.

(b) In the absence of consular access to many fishermen and prisoners, it is not possible to determine the details of sentences awarded.

(c) to (e) Government have consistently taken up the issue of Indians in custody in Pakistan with the Government of Pakistan, including at the highest level. During the visit of EAM to Pakistan on January 13-14, 2007, it was decided to form a Judicial Committee comprising judges from India and Pakistan to ensure expeditious release and humane treatment of prisoners in either country. The Committee first met on 26-27 February, 2008 in New Delhi. It recommended that a consolidated list with full particulars and their present status of nationals in each other's jails be exchanged on 31st March, 2008 and that prisoners who have completed their sentences and whose national status has been verified be released forthwith. The lists of prisoners have been exchanged by the two Governments on March 31 and are under study. India expects the Government of Pakistan to implement the recommendations of the Judicial Committee to release and provide consular access to all detained fishermen and prisoners.